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THE rulers of this country are understandably perturbed over what is happening in Bihar. Their campaign against the movement for dissolution of the State Assembly has not caught on; despite their daily slandering of J. P. Narayan as a budding fascist and dictator and a recipient of tainted money from shady industrialists, the people of Bihar, especially students and youths, continue to respond to his call. It is evident that the combined strength of the Congress and its unfailing ally, the CPI, is unable to contain the movement; the administration in Bihar stands still for months and the Government has practically ceased to function. Reports have appeared that one of the first tasks of the new President after his election and assumption of office later this month will be to impose President's rule on Bihar; the Ministry will be dissolved but not the Assembly obviously because this may appear as a blatant admission of defeat by the ruling party. New Delhi is hoping that dissolution of the Ghafoor Ministry will pacify the agitators and after some time it will be possible to terminate the state of suspended animation of the Assembly and induct a new Ministry. The renewal of factional feuds within the Congress party in Bihar seems to confirm that the present Ministry is on its way out.

Mr Narayan has declared that he will not rest till the Assembly has been dissolved. The no-tax campaign and picketing of government offices are designed to intensify the movement; if the Government still remains obstinate, the movement will be gradually developed into what Mr Narayan has described as total rebellion. New Delhi will no doubt employ all means to frustrate his objective. As its attempts to alienate the people from Mr Narayan's movement have failed, it may now try to separate Mr Narayan from the movement. The Bihar Chief Minister has uttered a threat which has been interpreted as putting Mr Narayan on notice that he will be arrested soon; plans of far more drastic steps have also been reported. All these merely show how determined New Delhi is to thwart the demand for dissolution of the Assembly. The reason is clear. Mr Narayan's movement is against corruption; he has demonstrated how widespread is the resentment among the people against the corrupt practices of the Congress. If he succeeds in forcing New Delhi to dissolve the Assembly and order fresh elections, the foundation of Congress ministries in all States and even at the Centre will be violently shaken, for corruption is pervasive in the Congress; every Congress ministry is as corrupt as the Ministry in

Bihar, and for all their quarrels, the factions of the party remain united in corruption. The Government is afraid that the prairie fire of Bihar will spread to other States if the movement there succeeds.

It is not possible to say at this stage who will triumph over whom in the battle of wills in Bihar. The ruling party and its Government have not yet shown all their cards: to what length they plan to go to frustrate the movement is not known. The circumspect may wonder what the step after Assembly dissolution will be: President's rule is Congress rule by proxy and even if elections are held soon it will not be possible to prevent corrupt Congressmen from getting re-elected through foul means. Mr Narayan himself is unclear, possibly because he does not have an answer. His partyless democracy will remain unborn till he has been able to devise a fool-proof method to ensure free and fair

elections. He has not described the social goals of the system of his choice either and the manner in which he proposes to achieve them. He has challenged the existing system but the alternative system he is offering is supremely vague. He knows that his non-violent movement, spiced with occasional talk of total rebellion, is acting as a safety-valve. One cannot forget his role in once-strong Naxalite areas. It is also natural that all political parties would have reservations about his recipe, for in a partyless democracy they also will be extinct. But the Opposition parties should also ponder what are they for if they cannot organise people's discontent against the Government into a sustained movement. That an individual looks like succeeding in this task where political parties, severally and jointly, have failed, shows that the parties are lacking, not the people.

Budget And Black Money

At last we believe we have some idea of the much-talked-about grand strategy that the benign Government in New Delhi is following to check the inflation. And the supplementary budget has to be thanked for providing this precious piece of knowledge. The strategy, to put it bluntly, is to raise prices to check price rises. This is certainly marvellous and very profound. Keep on raising the excise duties and keep on saying that they would not affect the prices of commodities for mass consumption, and prices will start coming down! Unfortunately, things do not go this way. All the excise duty rises are passed on to consumers sooner or later, and in sympathy with the increases in certain items, others fall in line and become vastly more costly. This has been so all through. And it must have appeared as a joke to many newspaper readers to read that the officials had said that this would not happen this time. God bless them for their infantile naivete. But their masters are different. They are nothing if not clever. They know that when another year of dizzy inflation would come to an end,

people would like to check the amount of deficit financing the Government has incurred and if the figure is too high, the main blame would be put on its shoulder. The highly popular Government would then suffer a very great loss of popularity. So why not guard against such an eventuality from now on? The Government's record must be kept straight. Raise taxes as much as you like and just don't bother how the rest of the economy is going to behave.

The supplementary budget has also taken the lid off another basic element in our anti-inflation strategy. It is: leave the black money and the black-marketeers alone. The line of argument seems to be that, after all, it is not a good thing to ditch the people who finance the elections, who provide the opportunity to some of our privileged citizens to serve the people. That itself is a great national service. Indeed, where would we have such a brilliant galaxy of Ministers and legislators unless the black-moneywallahs stood by them? So the nation ought just to pass over their usual peccadillos of cornering of stocks, indul-

ging in blackmarketing in all conceivable items and adulterating food, and fertiliser. Consequently, the supplementary budget has deemed it fit to leave the corporate sector untouched. It has included even the shadow of a measure to net in black money. We have promised all these. But for the time being, we must learn how to tighten belts.

Teach As You Travel

The Prime Ministers of both India and Pakistan have been travelling a good deal in their own countries, telling people what they should do to face the dangers, imaginary or real, internal or external. Their style of speaking is different—Mr Bhutto is by far the better speaker and much less given to the habit of moralising—but the contents are very dissimilar. Both smell a conspiracy when they are just unable to do anything about the internal situation, economic or political, a conspiracy backed by reactionary and sinister forces at home. Mr Bhutto is (a) having great trouble in being ruthless in Baluchistan; (b) in June this month the entire National Assembly, sitting as a special committee, will decide whether the Ahmadia, whom hold top jobs in the army and in the civil administration, are an infidel sect or not; and (c) there is the almost chronic jaundiced relationship with India, which worsened after the May 18 Rana than bang. But, for reasons one does not know yet, Mr Bhutto now feels reassured by what Mr Swaran Singh has said, and written to him. He also has given the rebel Baluchis more time to deliberate and come to terms. He continues, for legitimate reasons, to be worried about Afghanistan and Kashmir. The Russians look rather well after the Afghan army and are now said to be rather enamoured of the idea of Pakhtunistan; the growing concern of the Indian rulers and Sheikh Abdullah with Pakistan occupied 'Azad Kashmir'—which has road links with China—is also worrying Mr Bhutto may think that Kabul might be used as a ploy and Mrs Gandhi is trying to patch up in Kashmir in readiness

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There are reasons for looking for an advantage. The economic situation in is so desperate that even a docile and terrified population in the greater part of the country might well try to find a political expression to find a way out of their misery, made more unbearable by the recent ordinances and the July budget. The country is ripe for an explosion. Whatever one may say of the muddleheadedness of J. P. Narayan, he is able to stir some sections of the people and his resort to tactics used by Bapuji is unnerving Mrs Gandhi and her government. That perhaps is the reason why she is travelling and telling the provincial leaders how they should tackle the law and order situation and if she launches upon another adventure to thrill the hungry people.

There is trouble in border areas apart from Kashmir. The Nagas and Mizos have not given up. New Delhi wants Bhutto to come to terms with the Chinese, but the Nagas and Mizos are altogether different. Their new Government want New Delhi to ease up the ruthless security arrangements and negotiate with the rebels, but New Delhi just would not listen. China is often mentioned in this context. This is what Hindustan Standard reported on July 4 this year "Asked about the possibility of armed assistance to the rebels from outside the country, the Field Marshal (Manekshaw) thought very little possibility existed because any supply from Pakistan would have to come in ships by a roundabout way. Supplies from the Chinese also involved a long haul. He asked back: 'Now tell me why should they ask for outside help? Wherefrom do the Naxalites get their arms and ammunition?'"

One may add that no cache of Chinese arms for Mizos and Nagas has been found in the Iraqi Embassy in New Delhi.

Cost Of Living

The Government of India has in its hands a well trusted bureaucrats looking after the country's administration and plan-

ning. The time and energy of many of them are mostly devoted to finding ways of how to cheat the economically oppressed working class. Take the working class cost of living index calculations done by a team of fat-salaried economists attached to the Simla Labour Bureau. That the calculations are a fraud is already known. But that the degree of the fraud is so enormous was found out only when a West Bengal experts committee submitted its report a few days ago. The committee, appointed on September 1972 following persistent demands by trade unions, has found that the Simla Labour Bureau conversion factor changing the 1939 base year to 1944 was grossly wrong.

The Labour Bureau made 2.63 the conversion factor while the experts committee calculates that it should be 3.13. The conversion factor for the change-over from 1939 to 1944 was introduced by the Labour Bureau in 1957. This means that for the last 17 years West Bengal workers have been—and are being—cheated in a big way and they must have lost crores of rupees in their dearness allowance. What is more interesting is that the memorandum which the Simla Labour Bureau submitted to the experts committee during its proceedings admits that the conversion factor of 2.63 was wrong and it should have been at least 2.79 to correctly reflect the 1944 prices. It is now quite clear why both the Bureau and the Central Statistical Organisation strongly opposed the demand of the trade unions for the appointment of an experts committee.

One immediate effect of the higher conversion factor would be an increase in the workers' income in West Bengal. Some estimate that the increase would be about Rs. 60 a month. The workers in jute and some other industries including commercial firms in particular were the worst victims of the index fraud because their dearness allowances were based on the 1939 index.

The fraud has been exposed. But the question remains: who will pay for the losses which the workers have suffered for 17 years?

A Mini-State In Palestine ?

MEHMOOD HUSSAIN

ALTHOUGH President Sadat seemed euphoric about President Nixon's visit to West Asia, most of the people are not happy. A leading Kuwaiti newspaper described Dr Kissinger as a boxer who was gradually weakening the Arab world with blows to the body and then Nixon was arriving to deliver the knock-out.

Lebanon was excluded from Nixon's visit list, because it is difficult even for CIA and CIA-infiltrated Deuxieme Bureau, the Lebanese intelligence, to ensure Nixon's security in a place where Palestinian guerilla operations were expected to match the visit. Another Maalot-type operation was expected. Guerilla operations have taken place and Israel has retaliated by bombing Lebanon. Had Nixon been there it would have been a bit embarrassing for him to be in an Arab country which was being attacked by Israel.

Although the Western world gives credit to Dr Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy, it is not a 'miracle' that has been performed. It has been a strategy of American imperialism to bring about some sort of settlement between Israel and frontline Arab regimes to isolate the Palestine liberation movement which emerged after the 1967 war as a force to be reckoned with. In the period 1967-70, when the resistance was at its peak—and Nasser's war of attrition had caused sufficient threat—the U.S. had been thinking of a settlement through the Rogers Plan. Then the U.S. was of the opinion that if it did not come to good terms with the Arab regimes, its interests, in the long run, would be jeopardised, for the Palestinian resistance might overthrow the Jordanian regime which would be the beginning of the end of U.S. imperialist hegemony in West Asia.

Therefore, the U.S. was thinking of a formula to bring about an agreement between Arab regimes and Israel to isolate and liquidate the Palestinian re-

sistance. As things have developed in Egypt—where the process of de-Nasserization is in full swing, inviting American capital—it sufficiently strengthens the already existing doubt that there was some collusion between Egypt and the U.S. before the October War started. Instead of going ahead beyond the East bank of the Suez up to the Mitla and Giddy passes—in fact the Soviet Union had advised Sadat to come to these two points so that the Egyptians would be in a better bargaining position—Sadat started negotiations with the Americans. He took an absurd position by saying that since the U.S. was getting involved in the war he could not allow his forces to be massacred. Didn't he know that war against Israel means war against the U.S.?

Now the behind-the-scene scenario is becoming clear, although many people were misled by the outward appearance of the war. What the U.S. wanted was a limited Egyptian victory so that Sadat's regime would enjoy internal as well as external legitimacy in the Arab world; and it would be an accomplice of U.S. imperialism by making compromises with Israel, the Zionist State.

Although there is qualitative difference between the Egyptian-Israeli and Syrian-Israeli disengagement agreements because of Syria's fight-and-talk style diplomacy, the petty bourgeois regime in Syria might fall into the trap. But the Syrian President Assad has not totally sacrificed the Palestinians' cause. Support for its own guerilla group 'al-Saiqa' and the PLO would continue unabated; and also Syria has not given any iron-clad guarantee to Dr Kissinger to stop Palestinian guerilla operations on the Golan Heights. Of course there are conflicting reports. Some say that he was given an assurance.

Although Syria had rejected the Security Council resolution 242, now it talks within the UN resolution framework, and would join the Geneva peace talks.

Palestinian Stand

The Palestine National Council (PNC)—a sort of Palestinian Parliament in exile—has decided not to go to the Geneva conference on the basis of resolution 242

which brands them only as "refugees". The Egyptians and the Syrians wanted disengagement of forces, but the Palestinians want disengagement from resolution 242. The PNC may decide to join the Geneva talks only after getting an invitation.

The 12th Congress of the PNC held at Cairo in June was most successful. If the Palestinians are invited to Geneva it would meet again and might send a Palestinian delegation to hold talks about a mini-Palestinian State consisting of the West Bank and Gaza, some 22 per cent of Palestine, to establish an "independent fighting national authority". The Egyptians and the Russians wanted the word 'fighting' to be removed. But the PNC included the word 'fighting' to assure the Palestinians and the Arab masses that even after the establishment of the mini-State the struggle for the total liberation of Palestine would continue. The PNC declared that they will "struggle against any Palestinian entity whose price is recognition of Israel". It obviously means the PLO will never recognize the Zionist entity even if it comes to power in parts of Palestine.

Going to Geneva would not mean that the Palestinians have abandoned their ultimate strategy of total liberation; it would mean a "fight and negotiate" strategy. Of course, the PFLP may like to boycott negotiations. But if the representatives of the PLO sit next to the delegates of Egypt, Syria, Israel, the U.S. and USSR at the Geneva talks, it will mean the world community has recognized their cause.

It was a shock for those who thought that resistance in the occupied area has collapsed. The Palestinians of Israel have intensified guerilla operations and have gradually divided the Israeli society. Jewish writers, poets and intellectuals now advocate a dialogue with the Palestinians, to avoid massacres. There is also demand for more democratisation of Israeli society.

The Ma'alot operation, by Palestinian guerillas was one in the series of successive blows that have been assiduously struck against Israeli society. Israeli forces were responsible for the Ma'alot massacre because the three PFLP guerillas,

who live in Israel, took the children as hostages and wanted the release of some of their comrades from Israeli prisons. They were given the impression that the imprisoned guerillas were flying to Damascus. But they were betrayed by the Israelis. The deadline given to the guerillas was 6 o'clock but the Israeli forces stormed the school at 5:27 and killed the guerillas; thus the children were massacred. Then the Palestinian refugee camp, Ain el-Hildeh, in Lebanon was heavily bombed resulting in many deaths and destruction. Since the October war Israelis feel increasingly insecure and cast doubt on the efficacy of their army. The Ma'alot citizens called Moshe Dayan 'son of a prostitute' for not providing adequate protection.

Now the Palestinian strategy is to intensify the resistance inside Israel. Kiyah Shmona (the guerilla operation) took place on 11 April 1974 leading to the death of 18 Israelis and Ma'alot operations to remind Israeli society that even after twenty-six years of the creation of the Zionist-imperialist entity and twenty-six years of occupation, the people of Israel have to make peace with the Palestinians. Mrs Golda Meir's statement that "Palestinians never exist" has been totally shattered. There are many people in Israel who think that the rights of the Palestinians must be recognized.

New Role for Arab Regimes

After the October war things are moving. Zionism as a political force has begun to decline. Even American imperialism cannot entirely rely on Israel for maintaining imperialist hegemony because in the long run it will prove counter-productive. In the coming decade the U.S. would be dependent on Arab oil. Therefore, Dr Kissinger had to start his shuttle diplomacy followed by Mr Nixon's visit to improve relations with the Arab regimes.

Israel's traditional role was to support the liberation movements in the Arab world and Africa. The U.S. supplies arms and ammunition to some of the African countries through the third-country technique (Israel) to suppress the liberation movements. Also some of the

PLO's insistence on the total liberation of Palestine. The Egyptians fear that with such a precondition the PLO may not reach Geneva.

Once a fighting national authority is established in mini-Palestine, and if it actually becomes an independent Palestine State under the leadership of the PLO, it would become a great threat not only to Israel, Jordan and the U.S. but to some other Arab regimes. The establishment of this mini-State would boost the morale of the revolutionaries of the Gulf. Turkish urban guerillas, Iranian Maoists etc. Therefore, attempts will be made to create a degenerate mini-Palestine. But the 'fedayeen' would resist.

After suffering diplomatic setbacks in the Arab world, the USSR would give more support to the proposal for a mini-Palestinian State; only by giving more support to the PLO can it improve its image in West Asia.

This neo-colonial role of the U.S. in West Asia, based on the realistic assessment of the situation, has definitely overshadowed Soviet diplomacy. Yet some people believe Dr Kissinger might have reached some secret understanding with the Soviet Union. It might not have been possible for Dr Kissinger to make Syria agree to the disengagement without getting timely assistance from Andrei Gromyko, who reached Damascus in right time. Gromyko's talks with President Assad helped Kissinger. They were reported to have emphasised to both the parties the big-power interest in the negotiations; also they told them that unless they agree on disengagement, the super-powers might some day or the other impose a settlement.

Surprisingly, the agreement was hailed in the Soviet Union as a Soviet-Syrian joint accomplishment, and Tass described it as a Soviet contribution to the achievement.

The Soviet Union can only make up its waning influence in the area by supporting the proposal for a mini-Palestinian State. Russians can retaliate against the reactionary Arab regimes by giving material aid to the guerillas of the Gulf, which they have been doing to rival the Chinese influence. But the Palestinian strategy of total liberation is also em-

barrassing for the Soviet Union which has recognised the existence of the Zionist entity. The Soviet policy in the area requires a radical overhaul. If war is resumed in future it is the Soviet Union which would gain influence. Therefore the Soviets may not be interested in a lasting peace.

Syria is now talking within the UN resolution framework. It will go with the Palestinian cause to some extent. Their struggle on the Golan Front after the October ceasefire and till the disengagement is appreciated. Iraq will continue to be a firm supporter of the PLO's total liberation strategy.

As far as Egypt and Saudi Arabia are concerned, they would pressurize the U.S. to solve the Palestinian problem without which they cannot dare say before the Arab masses that America is their "friend". President Sadat and King Faisal forced Nixon to pay attention to the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people as an essential factor for achieving peace in West Asia, and he was forced to call the Palestinians a people and not refugees.

Things are really painful for Israel on the question of the rights of the Palestinian people. Things are moving fast after the October war; guerilla operations are frequent all over Israel and every operation has become a suicide mission; there is no security of life there; the first three wars had been the offensive for Israel but the last one was a defensive war; and all these things combined together give rise to a growing feeling in Israel that they have become politically weak, they have to vacate the Arab territories and one day they will have to hold a dialogue with the Palestinian guerillas who have become a great political force to be reckoned with. The Palestinians' political struggle—which comes out of the armed struggle—is gradually isolating the State of Israel. Israel opposes the move for holding talks with the Palestinian "terrorists" and for the establishment of the mini-State, although it is always prepared to hold talks with King Hussein to negotiate the West Bank. But any talks with King Hussein or his puppets about Palestinian territory, would be firm-

children of some prisoners that the king is ayed by even by the Israel 27 and then written rebanon several ce the easily efficacy citizen protest the pro-

used to train their officers in Israel. Now the U.S. wants this role to be more by the reactionary Arab regimes in West Asia and Africa. Drastic changes in the situation after the 1967 war and the Jordanian civil war of 1970 motivated U.S. imperialism to change its alliance, from Israel to Arab regimes, because Israel has been proved to be a national aggressor. For the U.S., it is morally and economically not very wise to always side with Israel. Moreover, the liberation movement in the Gulf is to be suppressed through the Arab regimes.

South Yemen (People's Democratic Republic of Yemen) is a progressive country which provides the base for the guerillas of the Gulf. The guerillas numbered ninety per cent of the mountain area in the Dhofar province of Oman. If the guerillas capture power in Oman, the oil-rich Arabian Gulf would fall into their hands and imperialism and the Sheikhs and Sultans, would be doomed for ever.

U.S. imperialism, after its bitter experience in Vietnam, does not want to be involved directly in the area. It, therefore, wants to make Iran, Saudi Arabia and some other regimes sub-imperialist powers to suppress the liberation movements in the Gulf. In order to fulfil these nefarious designs, the U.S. and Britain are arming these regimes and trying to spread the imperialist tentacles all over the Middle East. The Shah of Iran, in collaboration with the CIA is not only busy suppressing the Maoists at home, some of them are trained by the Palestinians—but also helping Sultan Qabus of Oman to suppress the guerillas of the Gulf. King Faisal also claims that it is his responsibility to maintain stability in the Gulf.

Now the U.S. is not against Arab unity as Arab regimes will serve the imperialist interest. Arab reactionaries will suppress revolutionaries in Arab and African countries.

The U.S. and Arab reactionaries realise that unless they solve the Palestine problem, they cannot fulfil their role. Therefore, they want a Palestinian regime similar to the Arab regimes. The regimes do not seem to be happy at the

ly resisted by the guerillas.

There is a feeling among many Palestinians that there would be no agreement and the negotiations might be of no use and the Arab States might return to war; yet they are prepared to see Arafat's diplomatic game.

The talk in the Western press and all over the world itself is a sign of victory for Palestinian guerillas, because the Palestinian people are passing through different stages: from mere refugees—whose existence was never recognized—to a nation; and from a nation to a national existence in an independent State. This atmosphere has been created by the relentless and determined armed struggle of the guerillas. Ultimately all concerned may have to accept the establishment of a mini-State in Palestine or a big State in course of time with a secular, democratic and progressive character. Yet there are people who think this State would coexist with Israel without formally recognising it, just as capitalism and communism coexist. It is expected to be something like North Korea and South Korea.

However, the mini-State, if established, would continue its relentless armed struggle for the establishment of a revolutionary regime in Jordan and total liberation of Palestine and the U.S. would try to sandwich it between Israel and Jordan. But the new strategy of American imperialism in West Asia would not last long, for the Arab masses at heart have not reconciled with Zionism and imperialism.

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The Mideast War In Retrospect—I

WILFRD BURCHETT

Historians may dispute who won the October war but they will have to agree that the war and its by-products transformed the Middle East and the world in general.

Arab critics of Egypt's President Anwar Sadat at least give him credit for the political and diplomatic results of his strategy of "heating up" the Middle East situation by putting the Egyptian Army across the Suez Canal and in inflicting unacceptably severe losses on the Israeli armed forces...

The inescapable fact seems to be that Dayan felt secure in a Maginot Line type complacency based on a combination of confidence in the "impregnable" defences of the Bar Lev line, which included what he considered an unbeatable "secret weapon", and a racist contempt for Egyptians as fighters.

Regarding the "impregnable defences", there is Gen. Shazli's (Chief of Staff during the operation) description.

Details now available of what went on the night of October 6 and the preparations for that action, prove it to have been a great military feat of which any modern army could be proud.

"The Suez Canal is a unique water obstacle which differs from all other rivers and canals for the following reasons: firstly the steepness and height of the banks on both sides which prevents amphibious vehicles from getting into or out of the water obstacle without previous engineering operations. This peculiarity is shared only by the Panama Canal and a limited number of man-made channels. Secondly the fact that the enemy had erected an earth wall, 40 to 60 feet high right on the edge of the east bank, which made it impossible for any amphibious vehicle to cross unless this wall was removed. Thirdly the fact that the Bar Lev line had been installed right along the eastern bank to strike at any forces trying to cross."

Then came the description of what Moshe Dayan certainly regarded as an

ace "secret weapon" which was due to his lack of concern about reports of an imminent attack.

"Fourthly", continues the account Gen. Shazli, "there were tanks of inflammable liquid, each holding about 20 tons, situated at short distances from each other. The enemy could pump the inflammable material on to the surface of the water and then set light to it, so the surface of the canal would become a blazing inferno that would burn everything on the water and even cook the fish within the canal. Anyone within 200 meters would be scorched by the heat. The enemy could keep the burning by continuing to pump the inflammable material onto the surface of the water."

The tanks were buried deep underground immune to artillery fire and tapped by underwater pipes. Rubber boats and pontoon bridges would have disappeared in a holocaust. With even the most effective fire extinguishers, the fires started would blaze for at least 30 minutes and in the ensuing battle between flames and chemical elements the latter would almost certainly be the losers. The "secret weapon" however was not a secret to Egypt, which devised a method to beat it, and thereby proved the Vietnamese thesis that man can always overcome the worst that other men can invent.

"Our plan was to send frogmen to close these (underwater) pipes with cement, while in the event of failure the operation to close the pipes, members of the 'Saiga' ('Tempest' commando units of the Egyptian Army) were to seize the tanks at once. As an extra precaution we observed the direction of the current in the canal throughout the day and on this basis chose crossing points where our forces could cross against the current and thus avoid the fire flowing on the water.

'Complete Success'

"The operation was a complete success. The enemy did not succeed in lighting a single fire. The stores of inflammable material were captured intact and even the Israeli engineer officer who planned the project was taken prisoner. He had come to the canal the day before

was the last report of the...
 ...to examine the tanks".
 The next big problem was how to cut through the 40-to-60-foot-high earthen ramparts which the Israelis had built along the east bank and those of equal height built by the Egyptians along the west bank. Altogether 10 such gaps had to be made, each about 20 feet wide so that bridges and ferries could be installed and made operational. After experiments with explosive work started on improving ultra-pressure water cannons, "until the Israelis were able to make a gap in about two to five minutes". The efforts of the builders of the Pyramids and the Suez Canal were not going to be the matter of earth removal decisions when it came to military affairs.

To sum up the achievements of the military engineers," continued Gen. Hailu, "they made 60 gaps in the earth ramparts and installed 10 bridges and only 30 ferries across the canal, and all this in between six and nine hours." Hailu was sounded by the thunder of 2000 guns accompanied by a salvo of 200 planes hitting at key points along and behind the Bar Lev line and 100 more at sensitive spots on the Golan Heights on the Syrian front. The Israeli defenders must have got the shock of their lives when they saw gaps in the earthen ramparts opening up, the earth melting like butter before the irrefutable jets of the water cannon; and even more so at the first wave of 8000 men crossing a flame-free canal in rubber boats, followed by tanks rumbling across the pontoon bridges. Within 24 hours, five fully-equipped divisions were across the canal—together with support units, well over 100,000 men.

Dayan could almost be excused for having decreed all-out mobilization, despite the warnings he must have received, and not having massed tanks and artillery for active defence, when the passive defence system had been brought to a degree of perfection. Four days after the crossing of the canal, he was to admit in an "off-the-record" briefing of Israeli editors that he had completely underestimated Egypt's ability to cross the canal.

"I had a theory that it would take them all night to set up bridges", he said, "and that we would be able to prevent this with our armour.... As it transpired this was no easy matter and our efforts to bring tanks up to the canal cost us very dear. We had not anticipated that".

I think that most military specialists,

even Gen. Dayan, grudgingly would agree with Gen. Shazli's appreciation of this phase of the canal crossing that "these brilliant engineering operations will ever redound to the glory of Egyptian engineers throughout the world".

(Abridged. From The Guardian, New York).

Dogmatism And Reality

PETER NIELSEN

IN the April 11 issue of "Frontier" HR and DA oppose my point of view concerning West Germany. The starting point of our disagreement is what the standard of living of the West German workers is, and I cannot agree with DA that this question has nothing to do with a political standpoint. The disagreement appears exactly because of the dogmatism of HR and DA, who stubbornly claim that the tendency towards absolute impoverishment of the working-class (which Marx discovered was a law of capitalism) prevails in the present-day West Germany; although this goes against reality. The reality is, that the tendency to bribe the workers (which was mentioned by Marx and Engels in connection with the industrial monopoly of England in the last century and by Lenin on any occasion when he occupied himself with the growth of opportunism in Western Europe and thus not could be unknown to any Marxist) prevails in imperialist West Germany today.

HR begins with "facts" and says that I lie worse than the bourgeois press. He quotes phrases from the West German press such as "tightening the belt" and "voluntarily decrease mass consumption" avoiding, however, to add that such words appeared, not under pressure of HR's imaginary reality, but as part of bourgeois propaganda to make the unions modify their demands in the negotiations. HR goes on claiming that since the mid-sixties the real wage has been decreasing, but later in the article he provides us with the fact that "only in the past few years the ave-

rage savings rate of the workers has approached 10%", thus making it obvious to the readers that the claimed real-wage decrease is to be found in the realm of metaphysics. HR admits that "in 1969, 49% of all working class families could afford a car", but he quickly asks us not to attach too much importance to this fact, saying that according to income, number of children etc. it differs very much whether a family belongs to this 49% or not. To this I can add that in 1962 the corresponding rate was 23%, which means that in the period 1962-69, which according to HR should have been characterized by a real-wage decrease, a quarter of the workers joined the ranks of the car-owners. Although corresponding figures for 1965 and 1973 are not available, the tendency in the rate of some other consumer goods in West Germany working-class households is very clear:

	1962	1969
TV	45%	84%
Radio	94%	99%
Refrigerator	55%	89%
Vacuum-cleaner	68%	85%
Washing machine	38%	71%

(Stat. Jahrbuch der BRD, 1970, p. 469)

DA claims as a "naked truth" that the West German workers are waging a "constant struggle" to maintain their "existence-minimum (by Western standards)". This is perfectly true if "constant" and "struggle" refer to the yearly wage negotiations between trade union bosses and capitalists (and

include the scattered strikes which, for instance, in the often-mentioned 1969 affected less than 1% of West German workers) and when you add that the bracket about Western standards means the inclusion of cars, TV, an average savings rate of 10% etc. For the sake of clarity it should then also be mentioned that this might be the existence-minimum of the West German working class as a petit-bourgeois working-class aristocracy but that it has nothing to do with either the human existence-minimum (a certain number of calories) or the Marxist conception of the resources necessary for the maintenance of life.

It was of course not my intention to claim that West German workers are not exploited or that they get houses or medical treatment of the same quality as does the German capitalist class. It was however my intention to state that our workers are living in relative prosperity, relative compared to world standards and compared to the impoverishment, which according to the laws of capitalism, will at the end be the lot of the workers. And while the temporary prosperity of the workers is the material foundation of social-democratic influence and social-democratic apology of imperialism, it is to me a proof of the disgusting nature of imperialism which by bribing a small section of the peoples of the world and maintaining inhuman conditions for the rest divides the working masses of the world.

The strategy of achieving socialism in West Germany is for HR that of leading the workers in the struggle for higher wages and other benefits (for that purpose the KBW—Communist League of W.G.—has in fact raised the demand for a 35-hour week and 8 weeks' paid holidays a year). The working class should then, through this struggle, become aware of the necessity of socialism. HR himself mentions that the non-union strikes for higher wages in 1969 and 1973 were made possible by a boom in the West German economy, and in the KBW Foundation Papers (Ergebnisse der Gründungskonferenz des KBW, Heidelberg 1973, p. 39-40) you read: "The working class has not been weakened through any longer period of non-em-

ployment. At the same time the attack on the real wage goes hand in hand with the boom of the state of the market (Aufschwung der Konjunktur). That improves objectively and subjectively the conditions of the struggle against the deterioration of living conditions. The working class must make use of the still favourable conditions of struggle in order to initiate the struggle and arm itself for more difficult struggles." HR and the KBW stubbornly refuse to see that the booms mentioned are booms of an imperialist economy, that struggles for getting benefits on the basis of these booms are struggles for the further linking together of the West German workers with imperialism and thus will not make the workers aware of the necessity of socialism. HR has apparently never heard about the crisis-producing internal contradictions in imperialism and thus believes that my reference to the destiny of German imperialism according to the law of these contradictions is due to a subjective "hope" of mine for breakdowns in general. Maybe HR thinks that—as a result of the KBW-raised demands for further benefits—it will be possible to establish workers' rule in West Germany without any "economic catastrophe" affecting its prosperous imperialist foreign connections. In that case HR should declare himself to be an advocate of bourgeois socialism, of social-imperialism.

HR and DA do not like my "contempt" for the West European working class. This working class is however no holy animal and when it is imbued with petit-bourgeois and pro-imperialist sentiments it is the duty of communists not to lie such facts away but to criticise it. HR thinks that the idea of the peoples in the imperialist countries sucking the blood of the peoples in the suppressed countries is an instrument against the solidarity of the peoples against imperialism. However, any international solidarity, other than phraseological, should be based on the recognition of reality. The ideas to which HR refers with anger are nothing but the recognition of the deep connection between imperialism and opportunism in the working class, the knowledge of which in 1920 made Lenin declare at the 2nd

Congress of the Comintern: "Here we must ask: how is the persistence of these trends in Europe to be explained? Why is this opportunism stronger in Western Europe than in our country? It is because the culture of the advanced countries has been, and still is, the result of their being able to live at the expense of a thousand million oppressed people. It is because the capitalists of these countries obtain a great deal more of this way than they could obtain of profits by plundering the workers of their own countries."

"Before the war, it was calculated that the three richest countries—Britain, France and Germany—got between eight and ten thousand million francs a year from the export of capital alone apart from other sources."

"It goes without saying that out of this tidy sum, at least five hundred millions can be spent as a sop to the labour leaders and the labour aristocracy, on all sorts of bribes. The whole thing boils down to nothing but bribery. It is done in a thousand different ways: by increasing cultural facilities in the largest centres, by creating educational institutions, and by providing co-operative, trade union and parliamentary leaders with thousands of cushy jobs. This is done wherever present-day civilised capitalist relations exist. It is thus that thousands of millions in superprofits form the economic basis of opportunism in the working-class movement." (Collected Works, Moscow 1966, Vol. III, p. 230).

প্রস্তুতি

৪র্থ সংকলন বেরিয়েছে

ফেলে থোকা দিন :

Western Workers

K. M. V. G. KRISHNA MURTHY

THERE have been quite a few write-ups on the living conditions of Western workers, the latest appearing in the July 6, 1974 issue of "Frontier". I feel a fresh treatise on the conditions of the working class in the West, in the lines of the classic work of Engels, viz. "Conditions of the Working Class in England", first published in 1845, will be of much value.

The crux of the matter at present is so much the condition of the working class setting a stage for revolution. The urban areas of the world, i.e., the developed capitalist countries, are bound to have a working class which lives on the surplus value created by the workers of the underdeveloped and colonial countries, sharing the same with their capitalist masters.

What determines the struggle is not the contradiction between the workers and the capitalists, in the advanced economies, but also the condition of and the contradiction between the employed and unemployed or underemployed. It is the material condition of the poor that matters, whether they struggle and clash with the capitalists for the present or not, as well as their proportion in society. Before science and technology made great strides into the lives of the workers, the material condition of the workers was poor. The style of life of the ordinary workers in the advanced West being the same as that of Class I officers in this country is of no consequence so long as the plight of the poor is unspeakable and their number considerable. It does not follow that better material conditions of living imply progress in the spiritual and moral development of the workers, for consciousness varies with existence, and bourgeois social values rule men's minds in a stratified capitalist society.

Secondly, that strikes are conducted for the quality of beer supplied in canteens etc. are an indication that the workers in the said context have been reclassified that their social position itself is a form of property. It is use-

ful to know whether such strikes succeed. Perhaps they do, since these successes further blunt the consciousness of the workers. Strikes so far conducted for emancipation or amelioration, in most cases, have been failures. There are, again, strikes engineered by the manufacturers themselves to relieve a temporary glut in the market.

Strikes fail because of the workers' incapacity to hold on during a prolonged action, simply because the means of production—hence the means of subsistence—are in the hands of capitalists whose interaction with labour is essential for the workers to survive and for production to continue, an inevitability of the capitalist social process.

Western countries are tiny bits of land with high density of population, necessitating private property to be held in the form of material goods, stocks and shares, and very remotely in the form of large estates of land or precious metals. The relative uniformity in the mode of living, as far as material conditions are concerned, blunts the contradiction between the haves and the have-nots, relatively, in these economies. In such cases it is the role of the impoverished that matters. It is their conditions of living that determine the foundations of society. The rich and the commoner may not have different conditions of living in the technologically advanced societies where electricity, T.V., automobiles are not only a factor, but also common features of general living standards. But the same set barriers between the poor and the rich in the urban and rural populations of the colonial and undeveloped African, Asian and Latin American nations, with a feudal and semi-feudal rural side.

These new factors came into operation after Marx and Lenin had drawn up their formulations about a working class whose life presented a tale of slow and steady death. It is no more the workers of a particular country set against the capitalists and exploiters of their own country; the shrinking globe has made the contradictions acute between the workers of the whole world against the exploiters of the world. Internationalism means realisation and identification of the enemies wherever

they exist. The established communist parties in most countries are more eager to gain credence from either Russia or China than to organise the masses on the issues, to fight out forces of reaction whether they are national or foreign.

There are exceptions. Vietnam and Cambodia reverberate with the spring thunder.

The Knack

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

IT is three hours now since I saw the Bangalore production of "The Knack". And I am now writing this with some reluctance.

There are many ways to judge a play, and mine probably is among the least sophisticated. I am no critic. Yet it seems to me that, on grounds of common sense, what I am about to do is defensible. For I propose to set up a criterion that sets conventional rationality on its head.

Up to now, I have seen plays judged and criticised on the basis of the author or the actors. I prefer to judge this play on the basis of its audience.

There is quite clearly a relationship between the play—its writer, actors and producers—and its audience. The one cannot exist without the other. What I propose is to shift the emphasis to the 'environment' in which the play is—no pun intended—played out. In one sense it is righting a past wrong. In another... let us see...

The audience was largely made up of representatives of the upper class elite of Bangalore—and India. The play, like this review, is in English. Only 2%—if that—of India's five hundred odd millions speak this language. Just about everyone in the audience—and this, I confess, is only an educated guess—makes over five thousand rupees a year. This puts them in the top one per cent of the income earners of India's five hundred odd millions. I can go on. But if I emphasise this point, it is to make only the following observation: while the play was most certainly held

in India, the audience was most atypical of India. In the larger reality of India and her society, "The Knack" is a misfit. In London or New York it would not have been.

This in itself is not perhaps very serious. Let us consider then the substance of the play and this audience's reaction to it. "The Knack" refers to the ability of a major actor, what's-his-name, to seduce women. Regardless of the factual situation in this respect in India—that does not concern us here—this is a topic that is taboo in the relevant echelon of this our Indian society. (Abroad it is not.) But that is not all.

The humour in the play is built around the sexual frustration of a second (major) character, who-the-devil-is-he. The two represent extremes. Between them is an unscrupulous and eccentric—and mischievous—painter whose function in the play I characterised during the play as that of Narada Mahamuni in Indian folklore. The foil is provided by a woman who as a young French belle in London is pretty much a fish out of water. Her character is perfectly suited to that of the vociferous but subdued suppressed bourgeois woman.

This much is essential as background for what I have to say. How did the audience react? Just as one would expect. To all appearances, everyone was enjoying himself. I heard enough laughs and giggles to assert this boldly. But it was not the carefree laughter with which this audience would have responded to the plight of Laurel and Hardy. It was a strained laughter. Except when the lines were brilliant (which was not often) it was the kind of laughter that is just a little too loud, quickly suppressed and followed/accompanied by a sly/embarassed glance at one's neighbour.

The reason, I think, is obvious. Just about everyone in the hall—I add the rider because I do not know—identified himself/herself with who-the-devil-is-he. Nor in the world outside the hall, that is where this elite stands. Then, in laughing at him, they were (uneasily) laughing at themselves. Hence the strain. In the case of Laurel and Hardy we

laugh at the absurdity of life. In this case we acknowledge its stark reality—and affirm our sense of futility. Neither the logic of the play, nor that of the audience permits any other solution.

I have made the point that the Indian elite who watched "The Knack" with me tonight is the Westernised elite. And here lies its tragedy. In Western society, where this play originates, its humour differs from that of Laurel and Hardy in degree only, for it reflects absurdity too. Here in India, as I have already argued, it mirrors the reality of a cultural misfit. The reasons and causes of this would take us far afield. What is of importance is the qualitative difference between carefree and strained laughter. That does not rest on the play. It rests squarely on the underdeveloped audience. This audience that apes Western norms is not Western, and can never be. It is a misfit both here and there: in a word, it is underdeveloped—and underdeveloping.

But if all this is correct, why does this audience produce and patronise such plays? Firstly, because it is a "play", and as such, "not real". It is like facing a tiger, thinking of it as a domestic cat, acknowledging the (true) fact that it is feline, and in the process letting off (some nervous) steam without understanding the nature of the tiger. That way the kettle won't explode, in the same sense that a child will (temporarily) stop crying if handed a bar of Cadbury's. Secondly, such a play fosters the illusion that the audience is "hip", "mod", "with-it" or what have you. This is the exact opposite of the true state of affairs, but it is from this illusion that this underdeveloped group of people draw their life-blood. Thirdly, it fosters the connected illusions of free speech, art for art's sake.

Perhaps it will be said that I exaggerate. In one sense that is true, for I have deliberately tried to highlight certain aspects of an unpleasant truth. Those who would dispute me must be prepared to present their own version of the truth, if a meaningful dialogue is to ensue. But to avoid useless controversy, I will try to show, by an example, that what I am pointing a finger at is

the truth. And that will also show why this is a reluctant review.

No Blind Bias

I was, tonight, part of the audience I am speaking of. My remarks, then, are undoubtedly subjective. I am conscious of this. And I hope that the consciousness spares me the burden of blind bias. Be that as it may, there is no reason to suppose that what applies to the audience does not apply to me or my group. To the contrary. Here I can speak with considerable confidence. The tensions I speak of are most certainly our tensions. The pressures are numerous and interconnected with our own underdeveloping reality; hierarchy, rank, individualism/tradition, sex, training, conflict of all sorts. We feebly press against it, but we will not face up to it. Like all the others there present, I will try to sugarcoat the pill. But I will not try to do away with the wretched bitter thing, for to do away with it is to do away with my safe cocoon like existence, with its security and its comfort.

Why then do I write in this vein? Who knows how the human mind works? From a caterpillar I have grown into a cocoon. The time has come to develop, to grow. It is impossible to keep on underdeveloping, to be underdeveloped for ever. I personally, and the five hundred odd millions in this country, must break the shackles that bind us—and these are largely of our own making. Here the usefulness of my analogy is evident. The emergence of the butterfly requires the destruction of the cocoon. That is a part of life. And if I write it is to share this understanding. For this is essential for a successful completion of the process of development; it is only this understanding, and joint action based on it, that will help us escape the clutches of underdevelopment.

A final word. Some of this will not seem consistent to one who looks at it in the light of cold and formal logic. But that does not mean it is wrong—it only means it is formally inconsistent. The development of a caterpillar into a butterfly is not a matter of logic, but of life. The ability to develop a fundamental issue from a simple event is a knack too. I rest my case.

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"Garm Hava"

The minority communities in all capitalist and neo-colonial countries face a common predicament and India is no exception. It is always the honest middle class people and the workers and peasants who are the worst victims. Not the opportunists who have the uncanny knack of always being on the winning side, nor the two-timers who can always turn themselves into servile corners, nor it is these hapless people who imagine the exhortations of the pimps to be as straightforward as their own hearts. They are the worst victims. 'Garm Hava' shows such a group of individuals slowly ground into destitution. The problems faced by Salim Mirza and his family are common to all such Muslim families in India. The makers of 'Garm Hava' have done a very good job indeed. And if the depiction of a very real social problem is considered to be communism, then I, for one, prefer communism to secularism which is nothing but a pseudonym for hypocrisy in this country of ours.

The makers of 'Garm Hava' cannot be blamed too much for their cinematic competence. The illusion is so perfect that it is easy to forget that one is sitting in a theatre. It is as if a window has been thrown open and through that we glimpse a family going about in their day-to-day life, loving and quarrelling, and rejoicing. It is difficult to forget such poignant scenes as the one in which the old lady hides under a shelf to escape the necessity of leaving the ancestral home. Salim Mirza's lone battle against tremendous odds and his final decision to fight the odds and join the mainstream of struggle are inspiring and exhilarating.

This warm and throbbing human drama is not just a tale of a Muslim family. It is universal in its significance. It will appeal to all refugees of all lands. The Hindus from East Bengal, the Jews from Israel, the immigrants in America and all other people who have had to leave their own home and land will find a bond of kinship with Salim Mirza. They will find epitomised in

Mirza Sahib their own struggles and aspirations.

Perhaps 'Garm Hava' does not point very clearly to the path of salvation, perhaps the treatment of the theme is somewhat wistful, but in the last analysis, the film definitely goes against the ruling classes. If the film-makers of our country can continue to produce such refreshingly honest films instead of deliberate misrepresentations of reality in celluloid, then one day the policy of appeasement and of presenting a false front of benignity carried out by the rulers with the help of such minions as the Film Finance Corporation will boomerang upon themselves.

Film-Coel
Calcutta

Sahib

On Unification

The article entitled "On the Problems of Unification" (July 13, 1974), while correctly indicating the dangers of liquidation, and strongly defending the idea of strengthening the CPI(ML), has made serious mistakes with regard to the process of unification and the evaluation of Comrade Charu Mazumdar. The proposal made in the article, if taken in toto, may also lead to liquidation. The authors of the article have isolated the process of unification from our party history i.e. the history of struggle between two lines in our Party. They have proposed that all the Central Committee members elected in the First Congress, i.e. the 8th Congress, should unite and if ALL of them unite and revive the CC, then they are ready to accept the revived CC as the genuine centre. What will be the position if two out of seven refuse to revive the CC? Should the CC remain defunct and paralysed until all seven revive it? This is nothing but fatalism. Unfortunately one member of the CC has joined the ruling Congress since 1970. Should the party remain paralysed till he is persuaded to come back to the CPI(ML)?

The CC should be revived by a majority of its members outside. If the majority unite and uphold a correct political line there should be no hesitation

on the part of any party member to accept this revised CC as the party centre. If, even after revival of the CC by a majority of its members, some party members or units refuse to recognise it as the centre even without having any political difference or any major difference, then they are practising nothing but groupism and splittism.

Now let us see what happened in the party. After the Party Congress in 1970 the then General Secretary did not call a single CC meeting. Placing himself high above the Party and the CC and without calling any CC meeting, he issued left-sectarian calls one after another; some of which even negated the party programme. Some responsible members, particularly some PB and CC members, opposed them and demanded a CC meeting. But the General Secretary refused to convene it. By making the CC defunct he kept the entire party in a paralysed state.

He expelled many comrades, who were also slandered, and set up parallel factions in many regions. In India's war of aggression against Pakistan he took a vacillating and national-chauvinist stand. During this entire period and even for a long time afterward, Comrade Soumya was his closest colleague.

By November 1971, the party faced a grave crisis. National chauvinism was running amuck, the party faced serious isolation and areas of struggle by and

প্রগতিশীল বাংলা ছোটগল্পে একটি সংযোজন

অকালবোধন ও অন্যান্য গল্প

শংকর বসু

সম্পাদনা : সত্যেন বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়

প্রকাশক : রায় অ্যান্ড চৌধুরী, ৮/২ হেক্টিং স্ট্রিট,
কলকাতা-১২

প্রধান পরিবেশক : বর্ষা পরিচয়;

৪৩/বি পটারি রোড, কলকাতা-১৫

অগ্রাঙ্ক প্রাপ্তিস্থান: নিউ বুক সেন্টার, ১৪ রমানাথ

মজুমদার স্ট্রিট, কলকাতা-২, বুক মার্কেট, কলকাতা

স্ট্রিট মার্কেট, কলকাতা, শংকর বুক স্টল,

গড়িয়াহাট মোড়, কলকাতা-১২

by collapsed one after another. Under such conditions, it was absolutely necessary to sum up the experiences, to correct the mistakes, to unify the party and hold high the banner of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung thought and proletarian internationalism. It was imperative to revive the CC which the then General Secretary was trying to bury. So, there was no alternative for the majority of CC members but to call a requisition meeting and revive the CC. No responsible party member will suggest that the CC should not have been revived till the General Secretary was convinced about the necessity and saw sense. Under such conditions in November 1971 out of seven CC members present outside (CM, Soumya, Ashim, SN, Guru Buse, Rajkishore, Mahindra) five discussed the necessity of reviving the CC and accordingly the CC meeting was convened on November 7, 1971.

The authors of "On The Problems of Unification" want to see the CC revived. But the revival has already taken place—in November 1971. If the revival of the CC be a correct step in 1974, why was it wrong in 1971? Many thanks to the majority of CC members who revived the CC. They have saved the party from liquidation. Moreover, they have not only formulated a correct Marxist-Leninist line but have also led the party in implementing it and re-integrating the party with the masses. The achievement in carrying forward the revolution by implementing the mass-line is remarkable, though not spectacular.

Comrades like Soumya and others who came to a correct line much later should have worked with the CC already revived in 1971. Instead, they formed a 'COC' as a parallel centre. It is really a regrettable position. It is also regrettable that some comrades are placing the CC revival in 1971 by a majority of the CC members at par with the 'COC' formation.

The CC has already put forward a draft Party Programme, a draft Party Constitution and a draft Self-Critical Report. It may be that there are some mistakes and shortcomings in these documents, which are basically workable. We appeal to all CPI(ML) comrades

to go through these documents conscientiously, enrich them with their positive suggestions and criticisms and thus help the CC in convening the 9th Congress of the CPI(ML) soon. We find no other alternative to fight concretely against the danger of liquidation at present.

Santosh Rana and
some other comrades
lodged in West Bengal Jails

Naxalites Up Again ?

Recent reports in the newspapers suggest a resurgence of Naxalite activity. This is to be taken with a pinch of salt. For the last two years we have constantly been assured by the police authorities that the Naxalite movement has collapsed and the activists are either licking their wounds in jail or on the point of realising that instant revolution cannot be had for the asking. Now we are told that they have risen again and are becoming a social menace. The police are drastically reorganising their intelligence cells to nip such insurrectionary tendencies in the bud. Suspected Naxalites are rounded up daily to spend the rest of their lives languishing in jail without even the semblance of a trial. Lately, quite a large number of young women have been held by the police and given third degree treatment at the time of interrogation.

The whole affair seems an unholy conspiracy to establish a police raj in this State and destroy the morale and militancy of our youth who are naturally more sensitive and inflammable than the other sections of our moribund society. The Naxalite bogey has been raised by the Government to sidetrack the burning issues of the day and cover up its gargantuan failures on every front. A socio-economic problem is invariably given a law and order veneer—this has been the practice ever since the Congress swung back into power in West Bengal in true Mafia fashion. The Curzon Park incident is merely a reminder of how brutalised the police force has become in order to satisfy its lust for power and glory.

Vast quantities of anti-social hoarders

and blackmarketeers today hold the entire country to ransom and dictate the course of events. These man sharks have no sense of value and revel in sheer blackmail merely to obtain temporary material benefits. I suppose it ever struck the Government that these people ought to be dealt with first as they are a greater menace to society than the "extremists" who are merely reacting against a system heavily weighted in favour of the moneyed classes and privileged anti-socials. If the Government insists on trifling with the feelings of impoverished citizens, it will soon have a formidable law and order problem on its hands and whatever complexions be given to it, that movement will be irresistible because it will spring from the bleached and parched soil of a ravaged country.

Sanjay Mukherjee
Calcutta

Unity Needed

Progressive cultural units of Calcutta and rural areas are producing far-reaching attacks by the police and goondas paid by the ruling party. It is a matter of regret that organisations like PLT, IPT, Chetana, Abhinoy Patrika are carrying on an idealistic inner struggle which weakens the cultural struggle against fascism. In this crucial moment the people and the cultural units should unite.

Biplab Mondal
Santipur, Nadia

How Long ?

Protracted trial in the Nepal Roy murder case in the City Sessions Court, Calcutta, is telling upon the nerves of the accused. The judge's order for serving them lunch during court hours as is being done in the court of Mr M. R. Mullick, Fifth Tribunal, Alipore, has not been complied with. The prisoners have been in jail for more than three years. It is no wonder that their tempers are frayed and their behaviour

occasionally abnormal. No one can see them if at times they are rude. There is no benevolent organisation that can help these prisoners in their distress.

J. Banerjee
Calcutta

Correction

I write this to correct the report concerning my daughter, Krishna Banerjee (Frontier, July 20). Krishna was arrested on June 20, and the police informed us of the same on the 27th. We have been visiting her since then according to our convenience.

Usha Banerjee
Bandel, Hooghly

The Qualities Of Mrs G.

You are myopic and this fact explains your inability to extol Mrs Gandhi who should be credited with having added a spiritual dimension to our democracy which is unequalled in size. It is a pity that you have sort of a pathological hatred towards this arbiter of our destiny conveniently overlooking the following features which make our democracy stand out from others.

(1) The parliamentary opposition has now nearly non-existent and this certainly is a sign of the sound health of our democracy enjoys under the leadership of Mrs Gandhi who attaches more importance to a stable government than anything else.

(2) People are so moved by the emotional overtones of her utterances on economic issues that they cannot think of a possible alternative despite the continuous rise in the prices of essential commodities and the growing unemployment.

(3) Unlike the Western democracies, ours is based on a concept of non-

violence. Our policemen have the full backing of our sacred constitution to kill off the alleged extremists according to the dictates of their conscience. This is counter-violence which in the opinion of our pundits is qualitatively different from violence. But, Sir, our policemen are not empowered to deal with the non-violent hoarders, profiteers and blackmarketeers in the same way in the larger interest of the world's largest democracy.

(4) Ours is a great democracy where freedom of speech is guaranteed but those misusing it to dislodge the charismatic leader from the seat of power can be either incarcerated or physically liquidated for the good of the toiling masses. In neighbouring Pakistan, for example, no such freedom exists to challenge the authority of Bhutto, the damned autocratic ruler who is out to crush the liberation struggles in his country.

Lastly, whether you do her justice or not, she being a great political thinker, is going to prove to the world that the current agitation led by the other political parties against her government are all "politically motivated".

Amiya Bhattacharjee
Calcutta

A Report

A number of teachers, writers and cultural workers brought out a demonstration on August 1 to condemn the police attack on drama groups in Curzon Park on July 20, when a young man died. The participants in the August 1 rally point out that it just is not true that the police did not lathi-charge on July 20.

The police version of the incident is incredible. According to it, the police arrested one Debarshi Chakraborty, "a person long wanted on serious charges", at which a section of the processionists attacked the police and they arrested 32 people without resorting to a lathi-charge. How could the police arrest "attacking" processionists without resorting to any form of action? No one, having even the remotest idea of how the police in such circumstances act would put any credence to such a version.

Another mysterious thing is the arrest of Debarshi Chakraborty. The fact that he was granted bail from the police station itself proves as a complete lie the police version that he was a person long wanted on serious charges. The conclusion is inescapable that the arrest was designed as a provocation.

That the police resorted to a wanton lathi-charge on that day has been confirmed by numerous eye-witnesses. We have reasons to believe that Prabir who was a part of the regular audience of the open-air drama and cultural shows which have been a regular feature on Saturdays at Curzon Park for more than three years, was a victim of police action. The way the police disposed of his body all the more confirms this opinion. He was taken to the crematorium under police escort and all the pleadings of his mother that it should be brought to the gate of their house were flatly turned down.

The large-scale detentions without trial or on the pretext of trial coupled with the killing of a large number of youths in 'clashes' with the police, or on the plea of one being an 'extremist' have for some years created the impression that the spirit of a police State has been fast overtaking us.

—প্রকাশিত হল—

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